

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2567

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 2605

LIMDIS/STADIS//////////

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, SCUL

SUBJ: ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MINISTER
OF EDUCATION

REF: (A) SANTIAGO 2381; (B) SANTIAGO 2006

1. SUMMARY. DURING OUR MAY 10 CONVERSATION ABOUT ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL, MINED CASTRO TOLD ME THAT HE HAS GIVEN LITTLE THOUGHT TO RESOLVING ISSUE OVER LAST FEW WEEKS AND THAT HE DOES NOT SEE ACTIVE ROLE FOR CARDINAL IN NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, HE APPARENTLY WILLING TO DISCUSS RETURN OF ST. GEORGE'S TO HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION IN PHASED PROGRAM WHICH MAY TAKE FOUR OR FIVE YEARS. END SUMMARY.
2. AFTER MY MAY 2 CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN HUERTA (REF A) IN WHICH HE SUGGESTED I DISCUSS MY CONCERN OVER LACK OF MOMENTUM IN ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL NEGOTIATIONS WITH MINEDUCATION CASTRO, I CALLED ON CASTRO MAY 10.
3. I BEGAN BY TELLING MINED ABOUT MY CONVERSATION WITH HUERTA AND BY EXPRESSING GREAT INTEREST OF USG IN SEEING MATTER RESOLVED AMICABLY BETWEEN GOC AND HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION. I THEN ASKED WHAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE ON THE CREATION OF A FOUR-MAN COMMISSION TO NEGOTIATE ISSUE, AS HAD BEEN SUGGESTED BY TWO HOLY CROSS REPS IN CHILE (REFTEL B). CASTRO RESPONDED THAT HE HAD BEEN
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EXTREMELY BUSY SINCE HIS APRIL 15 MEETING WITH REPS AND THAT IN

EFFECT HE HAD NOT FURTHER CONCERNED HIMSELF WITH THE MATTER SINCE THAT TIME.

4. HE THEN CRITICIZED LETTER SENT TO HIM BY THE TWO REPS OUTLINING THE COMMISSION AND ITS FUNCTION ON TWO COUNTS. FIRST, HE DEPLORED FACT THAT HOLY CROSS REPS WOULD NOT HAVE FINAL AUTHORITY TO COME TO AGREEMENT BUT THAT ALL DECISIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY CONGREGATION IN U.S. SECONDLY, HE REJECTED CONCEPT THAT THE CARDINAL SHOULD IN EFFECT HAVE THE ROLE OF ARBITER OR ANY FORM OF VETO POWER OVER DECISIONS MADE BY THE COMMISSION. HE FURTHER STATED THAT HE WAS PARTICULARLY UPSET BY FIRST BECAUSE HE HAD INTENDED TO NEGOTIATE ISSUE HIMSELF AND NOT TO DELEGATE THE AUTHORITY TO ANYONE ELSE. HE ARGUED THAT AS HE CAN SPEAK FOR THE GOC, HE WOULD PREFER TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE WHO CAN DEFINITELY REPRESENT CONGREGATION.

5. I NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT CONGREGATION TO DELEGATE FULL AUTHORITY TO ANY TWO INDIVIDUALS AND THAT GIVEN COLLEGIAL NATURE OF CONGREGATION, ANY AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY THE MEMBERSHIP AS A WHOLE OR AN EXECUTIVE BOARD IN U.S. I DEMURRED ON QUESTION OF CARDINAL, STATING THAT IT WAS UP TO MINISTRY AND CONGREGATION TO DETERMINE IF ANY THIRD PARTIES NEED BE INVOLVED. COMMENT: I BELIEVE THAT WHETHER CARDINAL IS INVOLVED DIRECTLY WITH NEGOTIATIONS OR NOT, CONGREGATION AND HE WILL WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER AND THAT HE WILL NOT LEND HIS SUPPORT, WHICH IS IMPERATIVE IF ST. GEORGE'S IS TO REMAIN A CATHOLIC INSTITUTION, TO ANY RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS (E. G. EXPROPRIATION) WHICH CONGREGATION FINDS OBJECTIONABLE.

6. AT THIS POINT CASTRO EMCUSED HIMSELF FOR FEW MUNUTES WHILE HE SHUFFLED THROUGH MOUND OF PAPERS ON HIS DESK LOOKING FOR SOME DOCUMENTS RELATING TO ST. GEORGE'S. DURING THIS INTERVAL COMANDANTE VERDUGO, SCHOOL'S RECTOR-DELEGATE WHO ALSO ATTENDED MEETING, TOLD ME THAT HE HAD RECOMMENDED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THE CASE SHOULD SIMPLY BE CLOSED.

7. CASTRO RETURNED AND SHOWED ME SOME HANDWRITTEN NOTES IN CHICH HE HAD SKETCHED OUT, PROBABLY SOME TIME AGO, A POSSIBLE FORMULA FOR RETURN OF ST. GEORGE'S TO CONGREGATION. FORMULA
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INVOLVES THE CONGREGATION'S ACCEPTING 3 TO 10 SEATS ON EXECUTIVE BOARD THIS YEAR, WHICH CASTRO HAD OFFERED IT MANY MONTHS AGO, AND ENVISIONS GRADUAL RETURN TO BOARD SEATS TO CONGREGATION IN EACH OF 3 SUCCESSIVE YEARS. MEETING ATSTHE CLOSE OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR WOULD ANALYZE SCHOOL'S PROGRESS AND DETERMINE WHETHER GRADUAL RETURN PROGRAM SHOULD CONTINUE. ACCORDING TO PLAN, BY 1977 CONGREGATION WOULD CONSTITUTE MAJORITY OF BOARD AT WHICH POINT IT WOULD CONTROL SCHOOL BUT BE OBLIGED TO

ABIDE BY CERTAIN REGULATIONS, E.G. NO POLITICS, OBEDIENCE TO CHURCH AND STATE REGULATIONS REGARDING EDUCATION, ETC. CASTRO DUCKED QUESTION WHETHER BOARD COULD POSSIBLY INCLUDE MEMBERS OF THIRD GROUP IN ADDITION TO CONGREGATION AND GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE THE CONFIDENCE OF BOTH ELEMENTS. MINED ENDED MEETING BY STATING HE WOULD CONTACT HOLY CROSS REPS IN NEAR FUTURE AND PRESENT HIS PLAN TO THEM.

7. COMMENT. CALL ON CASTRO DID NOT RESULT IN ANY NOTABLE PROGRESS TOWARDS RESOLUTION OF ISSUE. HOWEVER, CASTRO IS AT LEAST NOW FORMALLY ON RECORD WITH USG THAT GOC CONTEMPLATES EVENTUAL RETURN OF THE SCHOOL TO HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION. MEETING MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN OF USE TO CONVINCE CASTRO OF REAL USG CONCERN ABOUT PROBLEM IF, AS REPORTED BY SOME INDIVIDUALS, HE NEEDED ADDITIONAL CONVINCING.

8. WHETHER PROCESS OF RETURN AS CASTRO ENVISAGES IT IS ONE WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO CONGREGATION, IS, IS SUPPOSE, DEBATABLE. HOWEVER, IT WOULD SEEM TO ME THAT BEST WAS TO PROCEED AT THIS TIME IS TO BUILD UPON SMALL BASE OF AGREEMENT WHICH DOES EXIST, THAT BOTH CONGREGATION AND GOC ENVISION SCENARIOS BY WHICH SCHOOL WILL RETURN TO HOLY CROSS CONTROL. FROM THAT AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE FURTHER PROGRESS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, FATHER ROBER PLASKER OF CONGREGATION STATED IT WAS HIS PERSONAL BELIEF THAT IT WOULD BE AT LEAST 1977 BEFORE CONGREGATION GOT EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF SCHOOL, THAT IT SHOULD RECOGNIZE THIS FACT AND ACT ACCORDINGLY. CASTRO'S DISMISSAL OF CARDINAL AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN NEGOTIATIONS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE AND PROBABLY INFLUENCED BY CURRENT GOC-CHURCH TENSIONS.
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